

A
TRUE NARRATIVE

OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
*Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore, Mr. Rogers and
Dr. Whitehead,*

CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF
THE LIFE

OF THE LATE
Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

The whole Drawn up from a Statement of Facts
fully proved before a Committee, consisting
of THIRTY ONE GENTLEMEN, and
afterwards read and approved by
the said Committee.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Abstract from the Minutes of this Committee shewing
their endeavours to promote peace
in the Society.

London:

PRINTED BY C. PARAMORE, CHAPEL-STREET,
HOLYWELL-MOUNT, IN THE YEAR 1792.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE facts introduced into the following Narrative were stated separately, and signed by the person or persons who were witnesses of them: all men of character, and of respectable and independent situations in life, who are ready to attest on oath, what they have signed, if legally called upon.

N. B. The Reader will take notice, that the Narrative only with the Minutes of their proceedings, were read to the Committee, and ordered by them to be printed.



This Committee was formed on November 26, 1791, and consists of the following persons.

GEORGE WOLFF,
JOHN HORTON,
WILLIAM MARRIOTT, } Executors of the Rev. J. Wesley.
JOHN COLLISON, > Executor to the Rev. Charles Wesley.
ROBERT CRAWFORD, *Lothbury*, Chairman of the Committee.
H. W. MORTIMER, *Fleet-Street*,
JAMES SMITH, *Bridge-Foot*,
THOMAS GREENWOOD, *Fenchurch-Street*,
RICHARD SAUSE, *Winckworth-Buildings*,
THOMAS DOBSON, *Oxford-Road*.
JOSEPH BEARDMORE, *Milk-Street*,
JOHN ARTHUR, *Great Queen-Street*,
JAMES MILBOURNE, *Strand*,
GEORGE CUSSONS, *Great Wardour-Street*,
THOMAS TAYLOR, *Green-Street, Leicester-Fields*,
JAMES LOVE, *White-Chapel*,
JOHN FOLGHAM, *Fleet-Street*,
EDWARD COLLINSON, *Lombard-Street*,
JAMES HAMMOND, *Silver-Street*,
JOHN BLUNT, *Stratford*,
JOHN RYLEY, *Tabernacle-Row*,
WILLIAM SMITH, *King-Street, Cheapside*,
WILLIAM CLULOW, *Chancery-Lane*, Secretary of the Committee,
RICHARD EDWARDS, *Bedford Bury*,
WILLIAM WRIGHT, *Well-Close-Square*,
WILLIAM COWLAND, *Great Ailesbury-Street*
JOSEPH WOLLEY, *Clerkenwell*,
JOHN THORNTON, *Blackman-Street*,
JOHN HALLUM, *Borough*,
THOMAS DAY, *Ditto*.
JOHN BUTCHER, *late of the Borough, now in Kent*.

An ADDRESS
TO THE
METHODIST PREACHERS, and to
the PEOPLE of the METHODIST SOCIETIES.

Dear Brethren,

SOON after the commencement of this unhappy difference between Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Dr. Whitehead, we could not but observe, 1. That Dr. Whitehead had supported a public character nearly twice the number of years of either of the others, and therefore ought not to be condemned but upon the clearest evidence. 2. He now fills a respectable public situation, in which his usefulness to Society, and his own advantage, depend on his conduct and character: it therefore appeared to us highly improbable that he would sacrifice the usefulness and advantage of his situation, to any paltry sum he might gain by writing the Life of Mr. Wesley; and act contrary to the whole tenor of his conduct since any one here has known him, which is more than twenty years. 3. We could not but observe, that Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, began the attack upon him in the most violent manner, and in the most unchristian spirit; whereas we saw Dr. Whitehead endeavouring to promote peace, by every means consistent with his engagements. Suspecting from these considerations, that the whole truth had not been fairly stated, we determined to examine the whole affair in the most careful manner; and not to admit any facts, but such as were proved before us upon evidence which would be admitted in any Court of Judicature. The fruit of our labours we faithfully lay before you, and sincerely wish they may be the means of awakening your attention to the good of the work in general, by providing some effectual remedy to prevent similar evils in future.

LONDON, May 18, 1792.

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TRUE NARRATIVE, &c.

1. **I**MMEDIATELY after the Funeral of the late Rev. J. Wesley, Mr. Wolff, Mr. Horton and Mr. Marriott, his Executors, published an advertisement, cautioning the public against receiving any spurious account of his Life; signifying that a true History of him would be given and signed by them. They then requested Dr. Whitehead to write the history of his Life; the Preachers in town, and many of the society joining with them in the same request. This request was not made *to him* because Dr. Coke was out of England, but because Dr. Whitehead was judged the most proper person to write it. For some time the Doctor refused to undertake the work, but about the beginning of June 1791, he yielded to their repeated solicitations. In consequence of this compliance, the Executors signed an advertisement signifying that Dr. Whitehead was appointed to write the Life; and this advertisement was printed and circulated in his proposals of publishing it by subscription.

Though Dr. Whitehead was under no obligation,* but what friendship laid upon him, to give the fruit of his labours and abilities to the Society, yet the general expectation was, that he would write the Life of Mr. Wesley for the benefit of the Methodist connection, reserving to himself some advantages from it: these advantages therefore and the mode of receiving them were left entirely to his own determination; nothing being said about them when he engaged to undertake the work.

* The Doctor laboured occasionally as a Preacher, but he never received any thing from the people on this account; on the contrary, he contributed to the expences of the Society according to his ability.

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2. Soon

2. Soon afterwards, the Doctor calling one day at the Chapel-house, Mr. Rogers said to him in the course of conversation, "What will you expect for writing the Life of Mr. Wesley?" The Doctor answered, I cannot tell; I have not considered it,* nor spoken to the Executors about it. "But what are your thoughts of it, said Mr. Rogers?" The Doctor declared he was unprepared to answer: but being still pressed to say something, and not suspecting any design, he at length replied, I think I ought to have one hundred pounds for writing it. Mr. Rogers added, "Shall I mention this to the Executors?" The Doctor objected. He answered, "You may perhaps feel a delicacy in speaking on the subject, and I can just give them a hint of it." The Doctor replied, If you do mention it to them, it must be in the most delicate manner.

3. When the Doctor returned home he considered this conversation; and perceived, that consenting to write the Life for a sum of money, was hiring himself to do it: that if the money was paid from the Book-Room, the Preachers would deem the manuscript purchased, and might, and probably would alter it without his consent. The Doctor had been particularly cautioned against this attempt to alter his manuscript, by a friend who knew Dr. Coke very well, and he had from the first determined that the manuscript should never be altered without his consent. And wishing to prevent Mr. Rogers from making any use of this conversation to influence the minds of the Executors, he sent for Mr. Marriott, who called upon him the next morning. The Doctor proposed, as a compensation for writing the Life of Mr. Wesley, to take one half of the profits arising from the sale of it for two years; after which the whole should be the property of the Book-Room for ever. Mr. Marriott very readily accepted of the offer. Mr. Horton calling soon after, the Doctor made the same proposition to him, and he thankfully accepted of it. Mr. Wolff afterwards acceded to what the other two Executors had done. The three Executors testify that this was the agreement they made with Dr. Whitehead, and say they thought it fair and liberal.*

4. It was understood by all parties, that as Dr. Whitehead was one of the persons to whom Mr. Wesley had bequeathed his manuscripts, he would of course have the use of them

* By this agreement Dr. Whitehead considered himself as holding the copy-right for two years, in order to prevent any alterations from being made without his consent.

in writing the Life. He now wanted them, and Dr. Coke being in London, Dr. Whitehead wrote to Mr. Moore then in Bristol, informing him, that having consented to write the Life, he wanted the manuscripts : that they were sealed up by the Executors, and he wished him to come to London, in his way to Conference, that they might be examined before he received them. Mr. Moore's answer is dated the 5th of July. He tells the Doctor he could not come to London in his way to Conference, and then adds, "*Yet I would wish you not to be hindered one day from executing your purpose: I am therefore very willing that Mr. Creighton should act for me. I think the whole might be given into your care (to be afterwards examined) and an inventory taken.*" Dr. Coke agreed to this proposition; and Dr. Coke, Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Creighton, who acted as Mr. Moore's representative, went into the room where the papers were sealed up, and took possession of them. Dr. Coke wrote a title on the bundles; Mrs. Rogers took an inventory of them: and Mr. Creighton packed them in a box to deliver them to Dr. Whitehead, and they were sent to Dr. Whitehead's house. At the time these papers were delivered to him, no restraint was laid upon him in respect to the use he should make of them in writing the Life; nor any power claimed over the extracts he should make from them. This claim was not heard of till after the Conference.

5. Dr. Whitehead's agreement with the Executors was not kept a secret, nor did he apprehend it would be disagreeable to the Preachers. But in a meeting held at the Book-Room about the middle of July, when the Executors examined the monthly accounts of the books, Mr. Rogers mentioned the terms of writing the Life of Mr. Wesley; and stated to the Executors, that from a conversation he had with Dr. Whitehead, he could inform them the Doctor would be satisfied with one hundred pounds for writing it. He represented this in such a manner as firmly persuaded Mr. Marriott, that the Doctor had altered his mind after he had made the proposal to him of taking one half of the profits for two years. The two Executors present, believing what Mr. Rogers said was perfectly agreeable to the views and wishes of Dr. Whitehead, agreed the sum should be one hundred guineas.

6. Dr. Whitehead knew nothing of this meeting nor of the transaction above-mentioned. But calling a few days after at the Book-Room he found Mr. Rogers and Mr. Whitfield alone. "Doctor, said Mr. Rogers, the Executors have

have agreed to give you one hundred guineas for writing the Life." The Doctor replied, That he had made an agreement with the Executors of a different kind. "Yes," said Mr. Rogers, but the Executors would rather give you a certain sum for doing it." The Doctor expostulated with them, and added "The agreement I made with the Executors was the most equitable and the most honourable both to me and the work." Mr. Whitfield answered, that they could not make up their accounts so as to ascertain the profits on one article. The Doctor says, he thought this a mere pretence and turned away from them.

We think the conduct of Mr. Rogers very extraordinary. The first conversation he had with Dr. Whitehead on the subject, had the appearance of being accidental and without design. But we learn from Mr. Whitfield, that it was with design on the part of Mr. Rogers, and this made him so earnest to obtain the Doctor's answer.* Was this an upright conduct? It appears from the conversation just now stated, that both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Whitfield knew of the Doctor's agreement with the Executors, before the meeting at the Book-Room: and yet Mr. Rogers made use of that conversation at this meeting, to persuade the Executors that the Doctor would be satisfied with a certain sum, as a price for writing the book. When he had got the sum fixed, by means of this deception, he tells the Doctor, that the Executors would rather adopt that plan than abide by their agreement.—We cannot view this conduct without expressing our abhorrence of it in any man, more especially in a Preacher of the Gospel.

7. When Dr. Whitehead was appointed to deliver the Funeral Discourse, he mentioned his fears, that some of the oldest Preachers might be offended at being overlooked on this occasion. He was uncertain likewise how some of them, and Dr. Coke in particular, would in reality brook his appointment to write the Life of Mr. Wesley. When Mr. Rogers returned from Conference, he asked him what the dispositions of the Preachers were towards him on these accounts. Mr. Rogers seemed much embarrassed, and ob-

* We understand that Mr. Rogers affirmed to a Lady, he was authorized to enter into that conversation with the Doctor. The Lady apprehended that the Executors had commissioned him to treat with Dr. Whitehead on the terms of writing the Life; on being asked the question, the Executors declared they never gave Mr. Rogers any authority to speak a word on the subject.

served, that the Preachers had not acted in these respects as he could have wished. What he said, and the manner of saying it, convinced the Doctor that they were prejudiced against him. He considered his agreement with the Executors as still subsisting; but they were now going to relinquish their office at the requisition of Conference, and consequently his connection with them in writing the Life was to be dissolved, and transferred to the Preachers. This occasioned some difficulty how to act. But in the beginning of September, on conversing with two of the Preachers, he found they entirely rejected the agreement with the Executors, and insisted that the conversation with Mr. Rogers was an agreement, which they expected him to fulfil. This circumstance unfolds the deep laid plan of Mr. Rogers: he was earnest to obtain the Doctor's answer to his question, that the Preachers might have a specious pretence for a claim upon him after Conference, when his connection with the Executors would be dissolved. We need not say this conduct hurt his mind; it appeared to him arbitrary and unjust; it deepened the impressions Mr. Rogers had made, by insinuating that the Preachers were unfriendly towards him, and drew from him a few strong expressions concerning the conduct of Conference, in his Letters to the Committee of Preachers. Notwithstanding this, he offered them the choice of any of the following propositions: 1. To allow the Preachers one half of the profits arising from the number of Copies they should sell, or to fix their profits at 25 per cent. 2. *To refer the ratio of the profits to be allowed the Preachers, to the decision of judicious men no way interested in the matter.* Or 3. To allow the Preachers the *usual profits of the trade*, and after a limited time *to make a present to the Preacher's fund*, which should be left wholly to him.

It has always been deemed the most fair and equitable way of terminating a difference, to refer it to the decision of an arbitration properly chosen. The party concerned, who proposes this, gives demonstrative evidence of the uprightness of his intentions: and we here find Dr. Whitehead, at the very commencement of this difference, standing forward and candidly offering to refer his cause to the decision of judicious men no way concerned in the matter. Had the Preachers acted in the same *disinterested* manner, peace would have been immediately restored. But the Committee of Preachers, in which Dr. Coke, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Whitfield acted

acted as leading members, * rejected *all the three propositions*. The rejection of so impartial an arbitration, as the Doctor proposed in the second proposition, gave just cause of suspicion, that these men had some private views which were not fair and honourable; and the event justifies the suspicion. Instead of the arbitration, or any of the Doctor's propositions, they offered him two hundred guineas for writing the life; or, to appoint *three of their committee* to meet three of his friends.

The Doctor, to preserve his manuscript from mutilation, would not be hired to write the Life, and therefore rejected the offer of two hundred guineas; but, being desirous of an accommodation if possible, he appointed three of his friends to meet three of their committee. And to shew the preachers how little he regarded money in this difference, he gave his friends the following Commission—It is here stated as attested and signed by the three Persons who waited on the Preachers.

“ When Dr. Whitehead Commissioned us to meet three
 “ of the Committee of Preachers on his behalf, he laid us
 “ under no restraint whatever, except in relation to the
 “ Copy-right: but he gave us an unlimited authority over
 “ the *whole profits* of the book, to dispose of them to the
 “ Preachers as we should think most expedient, and declared
 “ he would abide by our agreement.—Instead of three we
 “ met six of the Preachers, who insisted in the first instance,
 “ that the Copy-right should be theirs: the meeting therefore
 “ ended without any accommodation.”

Dr. Whitehead being desirous to convince both the Preachers and people that he acted on the most honourable principles in this business, called a meeting of the Executors and some of the most respectable persons of the Society, both for knowledge and piety. They met at his house on the 28th of September. The Doctor informed them he wanted their advice how to act, and would follow it, as he wished to promote peace by every means in his power. The first question proposed was, whether the conversation with Mr. Rogers, mentioned above, was an agreement, and whether it laid the Doctor under any obligations? They were unanimously of opinion that it was no agreement, and laid him under no obligations. It was then asked, What can be done to pro-

* It has lately been said that Mr. Rogers and Mr. Whitfield are not members of the Committee appointed by Conference. But it is certain that they both acted as such, and signed their names to the resolutions of the Committee as members; and it was generally understood at the time they had a right so to do.

mote peace? Here the Doctor put the matter wholly out of his own hands, and declared he would comply with any proposals of accommodation they should agree upon. It was at length determined that the Preachers should retain all the subscriptions they could procure, and have any number of copies of the *Life*, not less than two thousand, at one half the selling price, which is fifty per cent profit—This left the whole expence of printing upon the Doctor, with all the labour and risk of the work, and very little or no advantage. This proposal was delivered in at the book-room, and afterwards rejected.

8. As the Preachers *seemed* to be contending only for money,* it appeared mysterious that they did not accept of the last proposal, which offered them advantages that might possibly absorb the whole profits of the work. But we shall soon see that one of them, at least, had another object in view, which he deemed of more importance than the money. When the seven Trustees appointed by a deed subsequent to Mr. Wesley's Will were all in town, to take the Books out of the hands of the Executors; they had frequent meetings with the Committee of Preachers, in which the difference with Dr. Whitehead was considered. They took care however not to invite the Doctor to any of their meetings. An impartial judge is always careful to hear both sides of a case before he passes judgment; but these judges, as if afraid of knowing the whole truth, chose to hear one side only; and yet we shall find them passing a sentence of condemnation on the Doctor!—On Saturday the 22nd of October these Trustees and the Executors were all together at Doctors Commons. While they were waiting in a room for the Probate of Mr. Wesley's Will, the Executors used every means in their power, to persuade them to put an end to the difference with Dr. Whitehead, by accepting of the agreement which they, as Executors, had made with him before the Conference. At length the Trustees (of whom Dr. Coke and Mr. Rogers were two) fully agreed to it, and the difference seemed finally settled. The Executors immediately went to the Doctor and informed him that the Preachers had acquiesced in the agreement they formerly made with him; and appointed to meet again at the Doctor's house on Monday morning October the 24th, to execute the agreement on stamps. Accordingly they met at the Doctor's house at the time appointed, with a rough draught of the

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agreement and two stamps to execute it : but to the surprize of the Executors, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore appeared and brought a new proposition, which had not been heard of before through the whole of the dispute; and they insisted that this new proposition should be a preliminary to any agreement. This proposition was, that the Doctor's manuscript should be, "*First read over and approved by the Committee appointed by the Conference for Printing, &c.*" The Doctor said, that he could not in conscience submit to this requisition: that he could not, as an honest man, put his name to a work, which might contain representations of facts contrary to his judgment of them. Thus they finally differed, *not about money*, which was here totally out of the question, but whether the judgment of Dr. Coke and his friends of the Committee, or the Doctor's own judgment, must decide, what he should publish in the Life of Mr. Wesley.

We do not wish to judge any man's *intentions*, further than his actions make *them* manifest. Dr. Coke, Mr. Rogers, &c. began this dispute on the pretence of money; but the Trustees had now accepted of the agreement the Executors made with Dr. Whitehead before the Conference; this cause of the difference was therefore removed, and Dr. Coke was obliged openly to avow, what had hitherto been concealed under the specious pretence of contending for the advantage of the Connection—Dr. Whitehead's manuscript must be obtained, that Dr. Coke and his friends of the Committee might alter it as they pleased—This explains the reason why the most liberal offers of advantage from the life have been rejected. It is easy to conceive that Dr. Coke foresaw, if an impartial history of Mr. Wesley and of Methodism were published, many parts of his conduct in the government of the Society would be brought to light, for which Mr. Wesley had chiefly borne the blame. We do not wonder that he wished to have the power of suppressing or altering these parts as he pleased; and his conduct in this affair is altogether inexplicable to us on any other supposition. The requisition however, that Dr. Whitehead should submit his manuscript to such alterations as Dr. Coke and his friends of the Committee chose to make in it, was unjustifiable. This Committee had no existence when Dr. Whitehead engaged to write Mr. Wesley's Life, he was not therefore under any obligations to submit to it after it was appointed. And with the views he had of Dr. Coke's intentions, he could not submit to it, consistently with his duty to Mr. Wesley's character and to the public, as a faithful historian.

9. The Trustees and Committee of Preachers, now determined that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore should write the Life of Mr. Wesley for the Methodist Connection. So far Dr. Coke obtained his end. But as Proposals of a Life of Mr. Wesley and an History of Methodism, written by Dr. Whitehead, had been circulated through all the Societies in the three kingdoms, it was necessary they should assign some reason for so extraordinary an alteration. It was easy to see that a simple and fair statement of the point on which they differed with Dr. Whitehead, would not satisfy either the Preachers or people that such an alteration ought to be made. Dr. Coke therefore drew up a Letter, dated Oct. 31st, to be circulated through the Connection, in which he represented *money* as the cause of the difference. This shews Dr. Coke's views of the best method of influencing the minds of the Preachers. We hope it was as false a view of their dispositions as it was of the state of the difference with Dr. Whitehead. At one time the Doctor put the whole profits of the work out of his own hands, to be disposed of to the Preachers, by three indifferent persons as they thought fit; at another time he offered the Preachers fifty per cent for selling the Life, which might possibly be the whole profits arising from it; but these offers, and the true state of the difference Dr. Coke concealed from the Preachers and people, and represented Dr. Whitehead as acting from mercenary motives only, and *so extravagant in his demands on the profits of the work*, that it was impossible to treat with him. However astonishing it may appear, yet this letter was signed by most of the Trustees and members of the Committee of Preachers! Dr. Coke's *great modesty* would not suffer him to sign it, though it was written by him.

Dr. Whitehead published a few remarks on this letter, in as mild and conciliatory a manner as possible, and offered to give the Preachers the *whole profit of the work*, if they desired it.* Notwithstanding this and the former offers, Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers continued to assert with confidence, that Dr. Whitehead aimed at nothing but *getting money* by the Life. Every step they now took tended directly to prevent peace, and widen the breach as much as possible. Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore affirmed, in a printed circular letter, "*He (Dr. Whitehead) declares that if he does not print the Life on his own account it would be an act of injustice to him-*

* See the printed letter dated Nov. 9th.

"*self and family.*"—Dr. Whitehead's words are these, in a letter to Mr. Rogers Sept. 7th, "I know not that there are any persons who have authority to enter into any agreement on this business *till the next Conference.* If then I print the work before Conference, I must of necessity print it on my own account, or, *give it out of my hands without any security, which would be an act of injustice to myself and family.*"* What is it which the Doctor says, *would be an act of injustice, &c?* the answer is obvious, "*Giving it out of his hands without any security.*"† The words bear no other sense unless torn from their proper connection. But this was not the sense which pleased Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore. They therefore take out a part of his words from the rest of the sentence, —*print on my own account—would be an act of injustice to myself and family*—This was still more unfavourable to their wishes—It was absolutely necessary to make additions of *their own* to bring out the sense they wanted: this done they exclaim with triumph, "HE DECLARES IF HE DOES NOT *print THE LIFE on his own account, IT would be an act of injustice to himself and family.*" O! truth and shame, whither are you fled?

In the conclusion of his letter of the 9th of Nov. the Doctor addresses himself to the Preachers through the whole connection, in the following words, in reference to the demand of a power to alter his manuscript. "I entreat you for God's sake, for the sake of peace among the people, for the honour of religion in general, to desist from this arbitrary and illiberal requisition. If you still insist upon it, and make a breach on this account, *I call the living God to witness between me and you this day, that I am clear*; the mischief that may follow will lie at your door not mine; and you shall answer for it at the awful tribunal of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST." Since this solemn warning and appeal, Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, have continued to do all the mischief in their power, in a spirit of persecution which shews to what lengths they would have gone, if the civil power had been under their direction. Dr. Whitehead has had no hand in the confusion these men have made, except as the silent object of their revilings, which he has now patiently endured for six months without making any reply.

10. Dr. Coke, in conjunction with Mr. Moore, had now obtained some kind of authority for writing the Life of Mr.

* See the printed letter.

† That is, without a security for receiving any thing for writing it.

Wesley, and either of omitting or representing things as he pleased. But this did not accomplish the whole of his wishes; it was still necessary, if possible, to prevent Dr. Whitehead from finishing the work he had begun. There was no way of succeeding in this attempt, but by getting possession of the manuscripts, or, by hindering the Doctor from making any use of them.—On the 25th of October, the day after they were appointed to write the Life, Dr. Whitehead received a note from them, in which they express their desire to examine the papers in the following words: “Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore present their respects to Dr. Whitehead;—they now call on Dr. Whitehead to permit them to examine Mr. Wesley’s papers. And as those papers were left by Mr. Wesley, to be inspected by Dr. Whitehead and them conjointly without any reference to a publication of his Life, they expect that they will be permitted to examine and decide upon them without any reference thereto. And they entreat the favour of as speedy an answer as possible.”

On the 15th of October Dr. Whitehead had written to Mr. Moore, before he came up from Bristol, intimating that he would not suffer the manuscripts to be examined, *unless* Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore would leave such papers in his hands as were proper to assist him in writing the Life. They did not therefore expect that Dr. Whitehead would comply with their present requisition; and were preparing to make the best use of his refusal. But as the Executors had expressed a wish that this article of the will might be fulfilled, he had determined to comply with their desire; and returned Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore the following answer, expressing his entire readiness to fulfil the Will of Mr. Wesley whenever they pleased:

“Dr. Whitehead’s respects to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore—he informs them that he is ready and willing to enter into an examination of Mr. Wesley’s papers conjointly with them any day they shall appoint, the hour being first agreed upon.”

The Doctor expected them the next day; but they were in no hurry when they found him ready to receive them. A few days after Dr. Coke scalded his leg. This was a convenient circumstance, as it afforded a most excellent plea for desiring Dr. Whitehead to bring some of the papers to the Chapel-house. This request was accordingly made; and Dr. Whitehead returned the following answer, dated the 1st of November.

“ I cannot consent to bring any papers to the New Chapel ; nor can I suffer them to be removed from my house, till I have written the Life of Mr. Wesley. I ground my refusal on your own free and deliberate act : you have put these papers into my hands for the purpose of composing a history of Mr. Wesley’s Life—I have taken no small pains in the work, and the public expect it from me—I am ready to enter upon an examination of the papers with you, at my house, any day from five in the evening till eight.”

Notwithstanding these offers to examine the papers and fulfil Mr. Wesley’s Will in conjunction with Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, they confidently asserted every where, that Dr. Whitehead refused to fulfil the Will : that he held the papers by force, and would not permit them to be examined.* Dr. Whitehead beheld this conduct with astonishment and concern.—He thought he had a right to the use of the papers in writing Mr. Wesley’s Life, not only as one of the persons to whom Mr. Wesley had bequeathed them, but because Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore had committed them to him for *that very* purpose. He thought however, that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore had also a right to write the Life of Mr. Wesley if they chose to do it ; and did not wish to take an advantage of the delivery of the papers to him, so as to hinder them from making use of them. On the 18th of November he explained himself more fully on this head, in the following words, in a letter to Dr. Coke. “ I do not hinder the examination of the papers which the Will directs. I am ready to enter upon it any day you please, and wish it was already done, and an inventory taken of every paper in the collection. When this is done, I shall not wish to hinder you from taking copies of any papers you may think proper to make use of in writing the Life of Mr. Wesley. I do not even desire to prevent you from reaping all the advantage from them you can”—In his answer to this letter, Dr. Coke has the following words, “ At present *we* think it necessary that the Trustees (meaning himself Mr. Moore and Dr. Whitehead) should enter into a mutual, sufficient legal security, that whatever be determined by them, or a

* Many persons at first doubted the truth of this report : and there is reason to believe, that whenever any one called on Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore or Mr. Rogers to know the truth of it, they read Dr. Whitehead’s letter of the 15th of October, to Mr. Moore at Bristol, as a proof that the report was true ; concealing the Doctor’s concessions, which they had just before received.

"majority of them" * shall be decisive in respect to the publication (how, when, where?) of the manuscripts or any part "of them"—In another letter written some time after this they required Dr. Whitehead to enter into a bond with sufficient penalties, binding himself to abide by what two out of the three, that is, what Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, should determine. These extracts from their letters shew, that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore did not wish to examine the papers with Dr. Whitehead: they plainly hindered the examination, by requiring such conditions previous to it, as no man in his senses, circumstanced as Dr. Whitehead was, would submit to.

11. Finding Dr. Whitehead determined to proceed in writing the Life, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore insisted that nothing should be published out of Mr. Wesley's papers but what was first read over and approved by them. The Doctor considered this requisition as an infringement of the conditions on which he received the papers. The proposal of delivering them into Dr. Whitehead's hands was first made by Mr. Moore, Dr. Coke agreed to it, and Dr. Whitehead accepted of it. Here was a fair deliberate contract, for a special purpose expressed, entered into by persons competent to make it, and the *delivery* of the papers was a full and final ratification of it. The circumstances of this contract are stated above; and shew that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore did not reserve to themselves any power over Dr. Whitehead's *extracts*, but only a power to examine the papers afterwards, which the Doctor has repeatedly offered to comply with.—But when a contract is deliberately made and ratified, neither of the contracting parties can add any new condition to it without the consent of the other. If a contract could be once altered in this way, it might be altered a thousand times, and there never could be any certainty when it was finished. Dr. Whitehead therefore, resisted this power of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, over his manuscript, on the most fair and honourable principles.

12. They now became fruitful in expedients to hinder Dr. Whitehead from writing the Life, or to injure his reputation so much that few would purchase it; and they scrupled no means which seemed likely to promote the end.† An anony-

mous

* That is by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, who had now formed a combination to deprive Dr. Whitehead of the use of the papers.

† A report was propagated that Dr. Whitehead had said to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, "I will make use of what papers I please and burn the rest." This was a pure invention, manifestly propagated for the purpose of defamation.

mous letter was written and sent to the Doctor, full of injurious insinuations against him. The author pretended to be his friend; gave him advice, and assured him no one knew of the letter but himself. Dr. Coke employed a person to write out a great number of copies of this letter, and these were circulated from the Chapel-house, through London and most parts of the three kingdoms. The manifest tendency of this step was, to injure the Doctor in his profession, by injuring his character; and thus to induce him to give up writing the *Life* to avoid ruin, which was attempted by this letter in the most insidious manner. But happily, Providence had not put it in the power of Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, to ruin the Doctor, however well disposed they were to it.

13. To shew they were in earnest, and to make danger appear more threatening to Dr. Whitehead, they now talked of a suit in Chancery; and soon afterwards Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore retained the Solicitor General, and prepared a Chancery Bill of thirty-six sheets of paper. But before the Bill was filed it was thought necessary that Dr. Whitehead should be put out of the Society, lest it should be said they went to law with a brother. Accordingly, on the 9th of De-

tion. The Doctor mentioned it in a letter to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, and requested an explicit answer whether they had given any countenance to such a report. They remained silent on that subject. But Dr. Whitehead had certain information that Mr. Moore, by *innuendoes*, had endeavoured to give credibility to the story. At length finding nobody disposed to believe it they suffered it to die away.

Innumerable stories have been invented and propagated with great industry, as void of truth as the authors of them are of shame. Some of these stories, indeed, were destitute of all probability; but they answered the purpose of working up the minds of the lowest of the people to believe, that Dr. Whitehead is a perfect monster of covetousness and wickedness—A poor person or two one day affirmed with great earnestness, that the Preachers had offered Dr. Whitehead five hundred a year for writing the *Life* of Mr. Wesley, but that did not satisfy him, he would have the whole profits of the Book-room, which are supposed to be about two thousand per annum. A person actually came to the Doctor, in great agitation, to know the truth of this story. A report is now in circulation (May 1792) that Dr. Whitehead declares, he will ruin the Methodist Society, if he lose his soul in doing it. Such a report may answer the purpose of Mr. Rogers, or some of his party, in deluding the common people, and inflaming their minds against the Doctor; but it must injure their cause in the opinion of those who have any reflection, as being altogether incredible. Dr. Whitehead was brought up among the Methodists from a child; he sincerely loves the Connection, is ready to do every thing in his power to promote the peace and happiness of it; he laments the present dissensions, and has no otherways been the occasion of them, than by calmly and quietly *doing his duty*, with a view to benefit the Society and serve the interests of religion in general; just as a Preacher of the gospel may be the innocent occasion of a riot (if the people are wicked enough to make it) by preaching in the open air or in private houses. Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, may raise a riot under false and artful pretences, and then lay the blame on the innocent—But God still reigneth and knoweth the truth.

ember, at a meeting of the Itinerant and Local Preachers in London, held once a quarter, Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, brought an accusation against Dr. Whitehead, in his absence and without giving him any notice of their intention. They charged the Doctor with refusing to fulfil Mr. Wesley's Will, by not suffering the manuscripts to be examined. They prevailed on the meeting (by what methods it is well known) to pass a motion suspending Dr. Whitehead from the pulpit. This motion however, passed on condition that nothing further should be done, till Dr. Whitehead had been waited upon and heard in his own defence. The motion was all Dr. Coke wanted; twenty such conditions round the arms of Dr. Coke are like burnt threads. He lost no time. On Sunday evening the 11th, he expelled Dr. Whitehead from the pulpit before a large congregation, saying many things tending to inflame the minds of the people. In doing this he openly violated the condition on which the motion of suspension had been suffered to pass, and yet he signified to the Society that he was only executing what had been determined at a meeting of thirty Preachers!—Dr. Whitehead heard nothing of this business till the whole was finished.

A general outcry was now raised, that Dr. Whitehead was going to violate Mr. Wesley's Will, by publishing his papers without submitting them to an examination. While Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and ~~Mr. Rogers,~~ were declaiming with vehemence against the enormity of this crime, as worse than sacrilege, highway robbery, &c. they themselves began to publish four manuscript sermons which Mr. Wesley had left behind him, without submitting them to the examination which the Will appoints, or consulting Dr. Whitehead about them. Here Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore actually violated that very article of the Will, for the fulfilment of which they pretended to be at issue with Dr. Whitehead; from whence it was manifest that they themselves were the aggressors and had no further regard to the *fulfilling of Mr. Wesley's Will*, than as a *convenient phrase*, by which they could influence the minds of the people against Dr. Whitehead.

Their prospect of success in the Court of Chancery began now to darken. We have reason to believe their counsel advised them not to proceed, as they could gain nothing by a suit at law: Mr. Rodda and Mr. Bradford objected to the expence, and would not consent it should be paid out of the Book-room: some of the most sensible preachers in the country,

country wrote to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore disapproving of their violent measures: and Dr. Coke found himself liable to an action of damages for slandering and defaming Dr. Whitehead, and expected it would be brought against him: the concurrence of all these circumstances convinced them they had gone too far for their own safety, and shewed them the necessity of making a retreat. But the difficulty was, how to effect this without the appearance of a defeat. It was determined to call a meeting of their select friends who might be brought to a resolution advising Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore not to go to law. They sent private invitations to such persons as they thought most proper. These answered the purpose of a packed Jury, though most of them were innocent and entirely ignorant of the *real* design of the meeting, and are supposed to be ignorant of it to this day.

In the beginning of this meeting a few texts of Scripture were read; then two or three persons, who were in the secret, enlarged upon them, and offered many reasons why they thought it best not to go to law, but rather suffer wrong, as they pretended! Here we see the men, who two months before would pay no regard to the very same texts of Scripture they now read, nor to the remonstrances of their pious conscientious friends, pretending to appear meek as lambs! What a difference between this and the passionate expressions of Mr. Moore, at a Gentleman's house in the neighbourhood of London: when ~~he was at the door~~ at the door, he exclaimed with repeated asseverations—I will have law! I will have law!!!

When the question was put at this meeting, whether Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore should go to law or not, it was carried almost unanimously *as they intended it should*, not go to law. Then Dr. Coke took out a paper which he or some of his friends had *previously* written, and read it to the people. He called it a memorial or statement of the result of that meeting, which was to be sent to the Preachers and friends in the country, and read to the people in town. It must be remembered however, that this paper was written *before* the people assembled, though it was pretended to be the *result* of the meeting; it is therefore evident, that the *result* of the meeting was determined *before-hand*, and that the whole was a contrivance to cover their retreat from Chancery, under a pretence that the people dissuaded them from going to law. They concluded with prayer—but what a solemn mockery of God, to address him who is the fountain of all truth, after
acting

acting such a scene of deception as this, in his presence, and in his house.

The conclusion was suitable to the foregoing proceedings. On Sunday evening January 22, Dr. Coke read the paper above-mentioned, to the Society. He told them it was the *result* of the meeting which he and his brethren had held, and that he and Mr. Moore would now drop the law-suit *because the people advised them so to do*. Was there no prevarication or mental reservation in this declaration? The whole was certainly a very extraordinary transaction. What is it which the men will not do, who are capable of deliberately planning and solemnly acting such a scene as this to blind the minds of the people, and then of connecting it with an act of devotion in a place of public worship, to give it the appearance of truth?

One object of this Committee was, to promote peace by every means in their power consistent with truth and justice. Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts continued to be an object of contention. It was evident that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore were now combined against Dr. Whitehead; though two persons they were but *one party*, and if two out of the three were to decide on Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts, Dr. Whitehead had no voice, contrary to the true intent and meaning of the Will. As therefore the three persons mentioned in the Will, were reduced to *two parties*, the Committee thought it reasonable and just, that a *third* should be introduced, in case the *two parties* could not agree. Upon this principle they came to the following Resolutions, on the 14th of December 1791, and appointed eleven of their members to carry them to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, and try what could be done to promote peace.

" I. That Dr. Whitehead will enter into an examination of the late Rev. John Wesley's Papers in his hands, on Monday next or any other day, from five to eight in the evening, in the presence of two indifferent friends; one to be chosen by Dr. Whitehead, and the other by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore."

C

II. That

“ II. That such papers as upon the examination shall unanimously be deemed improper to be published, shall be burnt immediately.”

“ III. That if any difference of opinion should arise, between Dr. Whitehead, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, respecting the destroying or publishing of any paper or papers of the late Mr. Wesley's in his custody, such question shall be determined by the said two indifferent persons; and if they disagree, by their umpire.”

A Copy of these Resolutions were sent to Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, with a list of those members of the Committee appointed to wait upon them: but they refused to meet the persons, and rejected the propositions.

At a meeting of the Committee on Jan. 10th, 1792, at which twenty-three of the members were present, the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to, and the Chairman was ordered to deliver a Copy of them to Dr. Coke, and to request him to return an answer in writing to the Chairman, on or before Monday the 16th of the same month.

“ This Committee having considered all the circumstances relating to Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts as well what occurred before as at the time they were delivered to Dr. Whitehead—are fully convinced from the clearest evidence, that they were put into his hands by Dr. Coke (and by Mr. Moore, through the medium of Mr. Creighton) with no other *design* than to assist him in executing his purpose of writing the Life of Mr. Wesley, and that therefore he has an undoubted right to use them for that end, without thereby incurring any nonconformity or resistance to Mr. Wesley's Will.”

“ And they are unanimously of opinion that Dr. Whitehead has in no instance done or committed any act that could in anywise warrant the proceedings of Dr. Coke on Sunday evening, Dec. 11, 1791, when Dr. Coke mentioned the name of Dr. Whitehead from the pulpit, in the New-Chapel, City-Road, before a numerous congregation, and said, that Dr. Whitehead kept Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts from him and Mr. Moore unjustly and by force: that there were many letters among Mr. Wesley's papers, from husbands concerning their wives, and from wives concerning their husbands; and also from parents concerning their children: that these and other letters were of a very private nature,

nature, and ought not to be known;* that he and Mr. Moore were hindered from examining these letters,† and burning such as were improper to be seen, and that they were exceedingly alarmed about them.‡—That Dr. Whitehead having acted wrong in not fulfilling Mr. Wesley's Will, they could not continue him as a preacher among them, and that in future he could only be considered as a stranger."

"This transaction took place without Dr. Whitehead's knowledge. He had no notice of it, no hearing of his case; no opportunity of self-defence. And he was publickly accused of a crime of which he was not guilty."

"By this rash and intemperate conduct of Dr. Coke, Dr. Whitehead's character has been traduced, the minds of the people have been inflamed against him, he has been cut off from a useful situation in the Society, and has been considerably injured in his professional interests. This is a matter of very serious consequence; if it be passed over in silence no man's character is safe. Any one or all of us may be treated in the same way: we may be *publickly accused of crimes we never committed*, and have no opportunity of clearing ourselves; we may be held up to publick contempt and reproach; we may be injured *by the mere wanton exercise of assumed power*, in our reputation and business, and among our connection and friends. Dr. Coke is travelling from place to place, and from kingdom to kingdom, but our situations in

* These observations tended directly to excite jealousies in private families, between husbands and wives, and parents and children; and gave a lamentable picture of the Society—He informed the people, that he and Mr. Moore having had access to Mr. Wesley's papers for several years, and having good memories, knew the contents of them. (See also their preface to the Life of Mr. Wesley.) In this case he well knew that the insinuations here thrown out, of the state of private families, were not founded in truth. But alas! what had this transaction, or indeed any part of Dr. Coke's conduct in this affair to do with truth? The tendency of all his proceedings was, to sow dissensions in the Society, and irritate the people against Dr. Whitehead.

† Whether they were hindered or not from examining these letters and the other papers, see the Narrative, pages 11 and 12.

‡ Is it probable that Dr. Coke believed any thing which he spoke! The papers were in Dr. Whitehead's hands; had they contained matters so dangerous to be published, would Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, have taken such unlawful methods of injuring the Doctor, and irritating and provoking him to publish them in his own defence, or by way of retaliation? If Dr. Coke did believe what he said, and he and his friends still acted in this manner towards Dr. Whitehead, it shewed such an unbounded confidence in his moderation and great regard for the reputation of the Society, as induced them to believe, he would not publish any thing to discredit it, however ill they should treat him.

life,

life are settled and fixed ; he can leave the consequences of his conduct ; but an injury done to our characters, abides upon us and upon our children.—*When an injury is done to individuals by the unlawful methods Dr. Coke has made use of*—it destroys the peace of Society, breaks the harmony of families, embitters people's minds against each other, and lays the foundation of infinite mischief. From these considerations we think that the reputation and peace of the Methodist Society, call upon every member of it, to oppose these rash proceedings."

"This Committee is therefore determined to support Dr. Whitehead against all such violent and unjust attacks, and to vindicate his rights and privileges to the utmost, as long as he shall continue to act in conjunction with this Committee."

"This Committee do require that Dr. Coke shall make reparation, as far as he is now able, for the injury that he has done Dr. Whitehead's character. This he shall do by every means in his power, such as by oral declaration from the pulpit, by a written declaration to be circulated in the Arminian Magazine and other ways, and by procuring him to be restored to his usual situation as a Preacher. Until this be done, it is impossible any further negotiation can take place. When this is complied with, this Committee will endeavour for an accommodation of the differences between the parties concerned, and will consent that a few friends on each side, such as will be agreeable to meet each other, may be appointed to confer together and fix the preliminaries of an agreement."

To this remonstrance of the Committee, and the moderate and christian requisition annexed to it, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore returned the following memorable answer to their Chairman.

SIR,

As the Committee, of which you have the honour to be Chairman, have either in their great modesty or in their forgetfulness omitted the most material *Facts* in the statement which you presented to us on Thursday, we beg leave to speak for them, and to supply what is wanting. If the following be adopted, we may give an answer to it.

We are,

Sir,

Your &c.

City-Road,
Jan. 14, 1792.
To Mr. Crawford.

Thomas Coke,
H. Moore.

" At

"At a meeting of the Committee to advise, support and defend Dr. Whitehead" through thick and thin, "the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to."

"1. This Committee having considered all the circumstances relating to Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts, are fully convinced, that they were put into Dr. Whitehead's hands by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, with no other design than to assist him in writing a Life of Mr. Wesley, for" the Book-room, viz. for the support and relief of distressed Travelling-Preachers, their Wives and Children, "and that he *therefore* has an undoubted *right* to use them for" *his own profit*, and according to *his own will*, without any regard to *the design of the Testator*: seeing that in so doing, he has only studied the *advantage of himself and his Family*, which we think should be continually attended to.

Remark 1. "For the Book-room" Dr. Whitehead received the papers under an existing agreement with the Executors, and he expected it would have been fulfilled, but which the Trustees and Committee of Preachers violated even after they had once consented to it. See the Narrative page 7 and 8. But suppose that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore delivered the papers to Dr. Whitehead under the general expectation of advantage mentioned in the Narrative, did not Dr. Whitehead's liberality even exceed that general expectation? He made a tender to the Preachers of fifty per Cent. profit for selling the Book, and then of the whole profit, whatever it should be. Did Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore expect the Doctor would give more than either of these offers contains when they delivered him the papers? When the Trustees and Committee of Preachers had violated every engagement with the Doctor, he did not seek his own emolument, but committed the whole to a Committee of thirty persons to dispose of the profits as they thought proper.

Remark 2. "Advantage of himself and family." This relates to the story which Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore patched up, and then attributed to Dr. Whitehead. See Narrative page 10.

"2. We are unanimously of opinion, that Dr. Whitehead has done nothing to induce Dr. Coke to inform the Society of the state of the dispute, relating to these Manuscripts.
And

And that the body of Preachers who determined that Dr. Whitehead should no longer preach among them, were equally mistaken, for it is plain that what Dr. Whitehead did, was for the advantage of himself and his family, and consequently very justifiable.

Remark 2. "The body of Preachers, &c." *The motion which passed at the Quarterly meeting of the Preachers, was only a suspension of Dr. Whitehead till his case was more fully heard, and he had an opportunity of defending himself. Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore knew this very well, though they here represent the matter differently. See Narrative page 14.*

3. "This Committee find, That the determination of the Preachers took place at the Quarterly Meeting, held regularly for many years, to examine the Characters of the Preachers; and that Dr. Whitehead had the usual printed notice of this meeting. Nevertheless, We unanimously resolve, that the Doctor had *no notice* of it, and consequently "no opportunity to defend himself."

Remark 3. "Dr. Whitehead had the usual printed notice of this meeting."—*The Committee complain above, that Dr. Whitehead had no notice of the transaction at the New Chapel, when he was expelled; had no hearing of his case previous to it, and consequently no opportunity of self-defence. Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore apply their words to a notice, printed long before hand, when a Quarterly meeting of the Preachers would be held in London; and then reason as if this was the true meaning of the Committee. A fair specimen of the shuffling of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, to evade the force of truth.*

"4. This Committee are therefore afraid, that many persons have been inclined to think, that Dr. Whitehead has been properly excluded from the body of Preachers, as a covetous man, who has not sufficient regard to Truth or Justice. Now this is a matter of very serious consequence. If it be passed over in silence, no man's character, who should act in like manner, would be safe. If any of us should have an opportunity of making a good hit for himself and his family:—if any of us should violate our engagements, and use the property of others, with which we were entrusted, for our own

own emolument, we also might be thus excluded. From these considerations we think that all the members of the Methodist Societies, who are inclined to follow Dr. Whitehead's example, "should join to oppose the rash proceedings of men," who regard truth and justice, and not enough respect the practices, by which fortunes are made.

Remark 4. *Whoever reads the Narrative will clearly perceive, who has violated engagements, truth and justice, and who has held them sacred—The insinuations concerning the motives of the Committee are illiberal almost beyond example—But there are men of a certain description, who imagine they acquire consequence by traducing characters greatly superior to their own.*

"5. This Committee are therefore determined to support Dr. Whitehead against all such attacks, and vindicate the *just right* which he has to outwit his employers, and to use their property for his own emolument, as long as he shall have courage to maintain this his *just right*, and to act in conjunction with this Committee.

Remark 5. "Outwit his employers"—*Properly speaking Dr. Whitehead had no employers. He was requested to write the Life of Mr. Wesley as an independant man; and he undertook it on the most liberal and independent principles. If there were persons who could in any sense be called his employers, they were the Executors only, who held the Books in trust for Conference. And with men of such honour and integrity, he could have had no difference.*

"6. The Committee therefore require, that Dr. Coke shall varnish over the said violation of truth and justice: and that he do this both by speech and writing. This we think he may do, either by denying the facts, or avoiding the consequences. Let him therefore declare from the pulpit, and afterwards insert it in the Magazine, That Dr. Whitehead received Mr. Wesley's papers in order to write a life of Mr. Wesley for his own emolument. Or if he cannot swallow this, let him say, that it is true the Doctor received them to write a Life for the Book-room; but that in keeping them for his own use, he did nothing that was unjust: for that he (Dr. Coke) is now convinced by *this Committee*, that this is only the usual mode by which men grow rich: that consequently Dr. Whitehead's character is immaculate; and that he ought to be restored to his station as a preacher, and to all the

the honour which he had, when he was thought a man of honour and probity, and a sincere friend to the connection.

“ 7. When this is complied with, we shall be inclined to meet with Dr. Coke and any friends on the other side, seeing that by their compliance they will evidence, that they are now become *prudent men*, who can say and unsay as it suits their convenience. With such therefore this dispute may be brought to an amicable conclusion.

Remark 7. “ Can say and unsay as it suits their convenience.” *How far this has been Dr. Coke's practice, is too well known to need any illustration.*

*Nothing need be said of the spirit and manner in which this letter is written. The whole of it speaks loudly for itself, especially when we consider that it was written by men professing religion, and preachers of the gospel; and that it was sent to a body of men, some of whom had been ornaments of the Methodist Society long before Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore were members of it, perhaps before they were born.**

The Committee judged this letter unworthy of any notice; but they beheld with great pity and concern, two *Methodist Preachers* degrading themselves, by treating a matter of serious moment to the peace of the Society, in the way of ill-natured buffoonery, and using this method as an artifice to conceal the truth. They contented themselves however, with entering the following Observations on their Minutes.

“ This Committee having no other object in its proceedings and resolutions, than to promote truth and justice and peace in the Methodist Societies, is sorry to find that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore do not appear in their letter of the 14th inst. to be influenced by the same christian principles.”

“ Contrary to the mild and peaceable temper of the gospel, their letter breathes nothing but resentment and the most bitter enmity against Dr. Whitehead, and the members of this Committee. It contains general charges against him of a very serious nature, but without any proof, and which, we

* These observations were not written by any Member of the Committee; nor is the Committee answerable for them.

are persuaded Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore are not able to prove. It attributes motives to our conduct which we know to be false. We are sincerely sorry to see such a disposition of cruelty, oppression and injustice, in men who profess to teach others the way of truth and holiness."

"This Committee has required nothing of Dr. Coke, but an acknowledgement of his fault, in the methods he has used to injure Dr. Whitehead's character, which the gospel requires in such cases, and which we think every man who wishes to act rightly will readily perform.†

We think the conduct of Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, in this affair, disgraceful to the Methodist connection. If it be tolerated we fear it will be repeated whenever they may think it their interest to treat others as they have treated Dr. Whitehead. If any man stands in the way of their peculiar schemes, however extravagant, they will traduce his character and do him all the injury they can. In this way they have treated the Executors and the other members of this Committee. We have been anathematized from the pulpit by Dr. Coke, with almost frantic rage; so that some persons who heard him, had serious apprehensions that he was out of his senses. He gave just ground for these apprehensions by his conduct at West-Street Chapel on the 19th of March, before a large congregation. Here he spoke of this Committee, in terms which made every one understand whom he meant; and at length screaming with such violence as gave pain to the audience, he said, "They are opposers of the work of God, worse than *murderers* and *adulterers*, for they are *DEVILS INCARNATE!*" And in his prayer he cried out, or rather shouted, "TAKE THEM, LORD! TAKE THEM!—to—heaven."*—Mr. Rogers has followed Dr.

D

Coke's

† Let any man of candour and integrity carefully read over this Narrative, and consider the care which has been taken to admit no facts on common report, but such only as have been proved by the most satisfactory evidence; let him read the letter from Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, and the proceedings of the Committee; and then he may safely determine what degree of credit is due to the most solemn asseverations of Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers, either in print or from the pulpit, when they think it their interest to mislead the people, in order to injure the characters of individuals.

* The good Doctor seemed at a loss where to find a place for these *Devils incarnate*; at length the superabundance of his *charity* and goodwill placed them in heaven. If Dr. Coke was *really* in his senses at this time,

Coke's example, and given us plenty of abuse, but seemed to have some doubts whether there is salvation for us. This statement of their proceedings may appear incredible to sober people, but the things were not done in a corner, there are many living witnesses of them. By these methods they have held us up to the people as monsters of wickedness; as persons not fit to live; and they have done this under the most artful and false pretences.—They have destroyed those social and christian dispositions which ought to be cultivated in every Society: they have encouraged backbiting and slander, and divided the dearest friends; and having thus trampled down the fruits of other men's labours in the Society, they lay the blame on those who have been *quiet*, and endeavoured for *peace* by every means consistent with truth and justice.—They have set the house on fire and endangered the whole family, *pretending* that a person in it has done something wrong; which, had it been true, could not justify these proceedings.---But surely God doth not see these things in vain.

We are no strangers to the conduct of Mr. Rogers for some years past, in different Societies where he has made rents among the people.—The little cunning, violence and ambition of Dr. Coke are almost proverbial. He seldom stays long enough in one place to feel the full effects of his conduct; but the injuries he does to persons in settled habits of life are lasting, and in some instances, may be of the most serious consequence to the peace and happiness of families. If such wanton attacks upon an individual, as we see in the case before us, be not suppressed, what security has any member of the Society for his character? or what man who has a character to lose, will commit himself to a Society under such a government? But we sincerely hope the Conference will disapprove of these proceedings, repair the injury done, as far as possible, and provide a remedy against such injuries in future. If not we think the people are bound in duty to look for some remedy among themselves.

time, we should be glad to know what are his notions of the inhabitants of heaven; and whether *incarnate Devils* enjoy any privileges above other *Devils*?—An old Preacher being close to a lady, a known friend of Dr. Whitehead, when Dr. Coke uttered the words, TAKE THEM, LORD, &c. whispered to her, "I wish you a good journey, Madam, to heaven."

Various

Various motives have been falsely attributed to our conduct in this affair: but we openly and cheerfully declare, as *honest men and Christians*, that we do not wish to see any divisions in the Society; we are exceedingly desirous to promote peace on principles of *Truth* and *Justice*. And we shall be glad to co-operate with our Brethren every where, in giving all the support in our power, to the two *Grand Characteristics* of OLD METHODISM, *Itinerant Preaching* and *union* with the CHURCH of ENGLAND, which union is now in danger of being dissolved by the introduction of Dr. Coke's ordinations.

The foregoing Narrative, being prepared by a select Committee appointed for that purpose, was read at a General Meeting of the Committee held the 18th of May, and ordered to be printed immediately.

N. B. Dr. Whitehead's Life of the late Rev. John and Charles Wesley, in two full Volumes octavo, is now put to the press; and the first volume will be published with all convenient speed, after the Conference. His friends and others may rest assured that these disputes will not appear in it. The whole will be written on the principles of truth and candour, with a view to instruct and edify, well disposed persons of all denominations.

